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Yugoslav “Socialist Aestheticism” and the Emergence of Modern Children’s Poetry

Jovan Ljuštanović

Preschool Teacher Training College in Novi Sad

Abstract

The paper deals with the ideologically conditioned changes of cultural politics in socialist Yugoslavia in the first decade after the Second World War (1945-1955) and their influences on children’s poetry. The sudden shift from party-controlled socialist realism towards freedom of (also ideologically established) scientific and artistic creativity has resulted in the artistic and ideological phenomenon that certain literary historians call socialist aesthetics. The paper will attempt to prove that the expression of this kind of aestheticism in children’s literature is modern poetry for children. Ideas of creative freedom and general social modernism were reflected in the educational politics and social welfare of children and youth. All this is expressed in poetry that gives priority to play, primarily language play, humor, and imagination over direct pedagogical function. Such poetry has its roots in folk and European literary tradition, welcoming children’s wishes and fears. It is emancipatory and simultaneously detached from many aspects of the reality of children’s lives and children’s status in society. Such poetry emerged in various ways and within various national cultures of the former socialist Yugoslavia, at the same time realizing similar, and in many ways, comparative aesthetic and social effects.

Key words: *aesthetic function; children’s poetry; ideology; nonsense; play.*

Introduction

In the first decade after the Second World War (1945–1955), socialist Yugoslavia witnessed a number of ideologically conditioned changes of cultural policies that touched on, indirectly or directly, children’s literature. This paper aims to present the effect these changes have had on children’s poetry. We hypothesize that the changes have conditioned the emphasis on the aesthetic function and the withdrawal into the

shade of the ideological function of poetry for children. The methods used in this paper are the reconstruction of the ideological, cultural and literary context within a specific time period, and the analysis of its relation to the topics and language structures present in poetry for children.

Cultural Policy in Yugoslavia between 1945 and 1955: Abandoning the Socialist Realism

During the first post-war years, the Yugoslav Communist Party, as a social hegemon, led a cultural policy of "statist coercion" (Lasić, 1970, p. 246), developing a special bureaucratic infrastructure for the purpose – Committee for Agitation and Propaganda (Dimić, 1988, pp. 37–46). That kind of a cultural policy was in its organization and content under the influence of theoretical sources and practical paragons of the first socialist country, the Soviet Union, which had been building "social realism" from the 1930s. Such a cultural model contains the "fundamental principle of the method – demand for an educational, social-pedagogical function of literature and art, and evaluation of reality from the point of view of socialism and the communist party..." (Flaker, 1986, p. 303). The "standard of accessibility of a literary or art work to a wide circle of readers derives from such a method, and consequently relies on traditional stylistic forms (hence the constant fight of theoreticians of social realism against 'formalism'" (Flaker, 1986, p. 303).

Owing to such politics, the cultural scope of former Yugoslavia formed a subjective reality construct, stemming from economic and social plans of the country and the Party. Its focal point, along the theme of the Partisan fight, is the restoration and construction of the country and zeal of the people. The task of literary criticism was to check, first of all, how literature reflects the implied reality. Literature seems to be met by an air of simple, but from the ideological point of view, devastating objection: "Our literature lags behind our contemporary reality" (Zogović, 1947, p. 197).

The political shock, which led to a shift in cultural policy, occurred in 1948 although, at first, it increased the demands for a consistent enforcement of socialist norms. It created an open confrontation of the Party and state authority of Yugoslavia with Informbureau of communist parties that hid the political conflict with the Soviet Union. The conflict had, as indicated by Branko Petranović (1988), a deeper background in international political affairs, primarily in political processes related to the establishment of the bloc division in Europe.

The need for a conceptual differentiation from the Soviet Union – political, and cultural movement toward the West and greater reliance on civic layers of society inevitably lead to change in cultural policy. The initiation of change is associated with particular performances of high Party and state officials such as Edvard Kardelj, who, in 1949 in the Slovene academy of sciences and arts, criticized social sciences in the Soviet Union, objecting to the "pragmatic understanding and application of construed dogmas for daily tactical-political needs" (Kardelj, 1950, p. 6). Actually, he criticized the

socialist-realist understanding of “party” science and, in contrast, advocated freedom of scientific work: “We hold that our scientists must be free in their scientific creation” (Kardelj, 1950, p. 6).

Because of the short period of socialist-realist cultural policy in Yugoslavia “socialist realism did not evolve into a separate stylistic form, nor did independent interpretations of the concept develop” (Flaker, 1986, p. 309). Still, there existed a relatively strong structure of the socialist-realist awareness and Kardelj’s speech was the initial step in the breakup of the socialist-realist paradigm that took place in the 1950s on the cultural scene of the former Yugoslavia. It happened through numerous, often rather severe debates that very often relied on ideological authorities. The content of the majority of the mentioned debates can be described as the continuation of the pre-war “conflict in the literary left wing” and it concerned the relationship between the social and aesthetic function of literature – possibilities of “synthesis of arts and revolution” (Lasić, 1970, pp. 245-292). At the same time, the deconstruction of the ideological orthodoxy was developing; a space for a new generation of writers who created their own artistic expression emerged. The creative dialog with contemporary tendencies from foreign, particularly western literatures as well as with particular traditional layers within national literatures came to life – obviously with the experience of modernism and avant-garde, and arts from previous eras. In the second half of the 1950s, it became clear that instead of some group literary schools, movements and programs, a cultural situation was emerging symbolized as stylistic polyphony of individual talents and individual works.

In sum, the literatures of former Yugoslavia, with significant national differences, had some common points which emerged from the ideological and cultural context: the entire area of former Yugoslavia underwent an anesthetization of literature, and a universal, often abstract-humanistic engagement dominated the thematic field. Ideological structures were apparently benevolent towards artistic creation. However, at the same time, they were paternalistically oriented. They supported difference in styles and artistic procedures, and to an extent differences in opinion in public, enabled freedom for particular, more radical, approaches and artistic experiments. A kind of warm, mutual embrace where ideology encompassed culture and culture participated in ideological aspects of public life prevailed until the end of the 1960s.

Here we refer to a cultural policy which was a constituent part of the general social modernism. The modernism was reflected in the rapid economic development, rising standard, fast urbanization, dynamic development of infrastructure, and mass media and popular culture. Such a development gave the government a certain social and political legitimacy. At the same time, it implied a high degree of exposed or disclosed tabooing of cultural creativity of the majority part of the politically and ideologically unlike-minded, those before World War II and those “compromised” in the war, regardless of their achievements. What is more, every serious critical approach to social and political reality was tabooed. What was at work was a subtle mode of

cultural policy, where the ideological structure "gave" society its creative freedom, but controlled it behind the scenes. Such cultural policy was simultaneously the antithesis and counterpart to socialist realism – "socialist aestheticism" (Lukić, 1965).

Changes in the Cultural Policy and Literature for Children

The entire cultural-political process has its version, with some particularities, in literature for children. In years after the Second World War, a particular socio-political structure focused on youth: Unified League of Anti-Fascist Youth of Yugoslavia (USAOJ) served to mediate cultural policies to the youth. A constituent part of USAOJ was the Union of Pioneers (Ognjanović & Prelić, 1982, p. 115). During the first post-war years, the major topics of children's literature were partisan battles, reconstruction and development, and the leading role of Tito and the Party.

As an example, even a glimpse at some of the titles of collections of poems from Serbian literature for children published in the second half of the 1940s, confirm that poetry for children massively celebrated social ambition.¹ The situation is observed in children's periodicals where topics in literary contributions are similar. This is how Dušan Radović (1949), editor in Chief of *Pionirske novine* sings:

*Mi znamo: Tito i partija bdiju
nad igrama našim
i našim pesmama.
Traktori oru, kompresori riju.
Tu zemlja naša put otvara nama.*²

The general perception of child and childhood is subordinate to the social and ideological function. That is why, when a poet turns to the child saying: "My dear pioneer, my living wish, my clam chowder, my cat whisker, my turkey leg", he must apologize for the warmth and humor: "Still, I find you very serious and respect you as you are firstly, the future builder of our great common house – the Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia" (Čopić, 1948, p. 5). The hierarchy is clear, the implied social role of a child is beyond feelings that awaken childhood and beyond humor, the educational is above the aesthetic.

An important factor in constituting socialist-realist literature for children is an independent publishing infrastructure intended for children. Such a model of organization of publishing, executed in the Soviet Union following the ideas of Maxim Gorky in the fall of 1933, was repeated in Yugoslavia after 1945 by establishing

¹ For instance, Arsen Diklić wrote the poem *Mali Rista traktorista* (1946), Mira Alečković celebrates the work of miners in her book *Podzemni heroji* (1947), and Voja Carić sings about building a tunnel through organized labor activity in the poem *Boj s Vrandukom* (1948).

² Eng. We know: Tito and the Party watch over our games and our songs. Tractors plough, compressors burrow. Here our country creates roads for us.

businesses in republic centers: “Dječja štampa”, “Mlado pokolenje”, “Mladinska knjiga”, “Novo pokoljenje”, “Detskaja knjiga”, “Dečja knjiga” (Ljuštanović, 2009, pp. 86–89). In the postwar years, such a specialized publishing infrastructure succeeded in bringing together many relevant writers for children and imposed an autonomous cultural and guild factor. Under the auspices of the mentioned institution was a number of young talents, those who were in the partisans and those who were not. Such gathering of writers, regardless of their ideological sign, signified a favorable circumstance for the development of literature for children, and indirectly preparation for future poetic changes in this type of literature.

The creative freedom in literature for children was “given” from the ideological authority, according to a similar model that took place on the great cultural scene. In the mid-1950s, the Central Committee of the Yugoslav Communist Party sent a letter about the activities of the Union of Pioneers which was nominally intended to central committees of the republics and Central Committee of the People’s Youth of Yugoslavia. The letter criticizes the work of the Union of Pioneers and suggests a new and thorough reorganization. It advocates the establishment of pioneer councils at various levels which would engage “people who have the love, interest, and sense for working with children” (Ognjanović & Prelić, 1982, p. 251). The criticism also targeted “weaknesses” in the activities of the Union of Pioneers which are reflected in the “introduction of a particular intrusive political work (lectures and political information for children), introduction of the overly military spirit and discipline that was not appropriate to children’s age and interests”. The letter commends the pioneer union’s increase of interest for the collective life and work, and its nurturing of patriotism, but resents “insufficient play, fun and everyday child happiness” (Ognjanović & Prelić, 1982, p. 250).

The letter will above all have particular institutional consequences: councils of Pioneer Unions were developed at all levels, from national to local, made up of a broad circle of people who had professionally and personally been involved with children and who were interested in such work. In 1951, there was an initiative that the councils turn into a massive republic organization for children’s welfare. One such in Serbia was *Društvo prijatelja djece* (Eng. *Association of friends of children*), in Croatia *Naša djeca* (Eng. *Our children*), in Slovenia *Prijatelji mladine* (Eng. *Friends of youth*)... In 1952, all of the mentioned organizations were interconnected into a Council for the education and welfare of children (Ognjanović & Prelić, 1982, p. 256). In addition to the existing publishing infrastructure, all of those organizations will be a significant institutional support for literature for children in the 1950s and an undeniable factor of its development.

The significance of the letter for children’s literature can, to an extent, be compared with the effect of Kardelj’s speech on the Yugoslav cultural scene in the Slovene academy for science seven months earlier. Still, changes in children’s literature evolved without many shocks and great debates on the public scene. Occasionally, everything

resembled a kind of "family utopia", an aesthetic legality within a harmonious community of creators for children, brought together in republic centers and related at the national level - Yugoslavia. Similar to the great cultural scene, literature for children was overtaken by thematic, stylistic and to an extent conceptual creative differentiation. The differentiation saw a mix of ideologically canonized topics and forms with at times shy and at times open penetration of a new understanding of the aesthetic and educational function of poetry for children. The paths of differentiation initially relied on the existing literary tradition and on the topics and particular formal models that it delivered.

One of the cultural-literary concepts realized under such new circumstances and which brought particular thematic and formal changes, was related to folklore. That concept collected at least two types of cultural and ideological impulses that influenced literature for children. One was, we believe, related to the great international heated debate between the two world wars about the fairy tale which had cultural, pedagogical and ideological content. There are indications, as hinted by Mira Alečković (1955) that even in 1947 there was a closed forum discussion in youth organizations about aesthetic values of literature for children. The content of such a discussion has not yielded factual data, but there are opinions (Ljuštanović, 2009, pp. 86-89) that it was influenced by a translated brochure that came from the Soviet Union entitled *Dajte književnost deci* (Eng. *Give literature to children*). The brochure contains a text by Maxim Gorky saying: "We must understand that there are no fantastic fairy tales which do not validate work and science" and concludes: "Children need not only learn how to count and measure, but to imagine, fancy and predict" (Gorki, 1945, p. 22).

In light of the new cultural liberalization after the 1950s, many professional symposia of pedagogues and writers of children's literature were held in defense of the fairy tale (particular writers and educators had certain ideological reservations).³ Along with the discussions on fairy tales there was an increased interest in folklore after 1948. Detaching from the Soviet-type of socialist internationalism, the cultural policy of Yugoslavia turned towards national folklore traditions, where populist ideas of culture mixed with ideological criteria that abstracted what was "advanced" and "revolutionary" in the tradition of particular peoples. The result was an increased presence of folklore topics and content in children's publications at the beginning of the 1950s.

Aesthetizing Poetry for Children

Such a combination of literary and cultural circumstances certainly contributed to the expansion of freedom for the fantastic and wondrous and widely opened poetry for children towards an oral tradition. It also contributed to the emergence of *Prepelica* (Eng. *Quail*) by Grigor Vitez (1956). This collection of poems transposes folk patterns

³ Some of them were attended by Grigor Vitez (Vitez, 1952, pp. 25-27).

on the thematic scheme and rhythmical structure: "Vitez brought into his poetry and strongly developed the verse of the Slavonian song that is sung in circle dance, a rhyming couplet in an octet, quatrain, etc." (Crnković, 1967, p. 110). The folklore connection is more than obvious in the genre structure of the book: there are lullabies, hopping rhymes, touching rhymes, counting rhymes, ridicules, songs that accompany children's play... Closeness with oral tradition is further confirmed and explained at the end of the book where direct relations of particular songs are given in relation to oral tradition in case the reader does not recognize or understand them in full. Some songs in *Prepelica* look like counting rhymes or separating rhymes, songs from children's games, but they are not so in their entirety. According to their genre, they are open to children's games, but in their language organization, rhythm, rhyme, euphony, and pleasing language form – a self-absorbed poetic text. Vitez's lullabies for animals, cat, bear, elephant, by holding on to the characteristics of the source genre start a game of re-semantics, and transfer it to the world of children's anthropomorphism of animals and world of play. The poem *Kako živi Antuntun* (Eng. *The life of Antuntun*) (Vitez, 1956, pp. 54–55), although strongly linked to humorous folk tales –mocking tales, and to some other oral forms, can be read in an entirely non-folkloric key, as a poem about individual freedom, the individual's right to live "his own way".

Slovene children's poetry of the 1950s shows hints of particular poetic transformations which rely on folklore. The transformation is characterized by poetic experience which in Slovene literature is constituted by Franc Levstik's songs for children, and particularly those by Oton Župančič. According to general opinion, Župančič, in his poetry for children includes "something entirely naïve and truly folk" (Glazer, 1978, pp. 6–7). However, as observed by Nono Vuković "motives taken from the folklore tradition are given an inventive and entirely modern treatment by Župančič" (Vuković, 1996, p. 152). That is the source of discontinuity with respect to the beginnings of socialist-realist poetry in Slovene poetry for children in the 1959 where it actually meant a continuity with the national tradition. Poets for children followed not only a relationship towards folklore but a relatively modern – Župančič-like "construct of childhood" which implied autonomy of childhood and had the sensibility for the specificities of a child's thoughts and perception of the world. Following that line of thought, poetic changes in Slovene poetry for children are for the majority part present in the theme of anthropomorphized animals. Among Slovene poets of the fifties and sixties of the 20th century the most dominant one in accession of game and humor is Toni Pavček "who in several of his collections (such as *Mačak na odmoru* (Eng. *Cat on a holiday*), *Velesenzacija* (Eng. *Great sensation*), *Čavrljija* (Eng. *Chatting*)⁴) manages to synthesize the positive experience of tradition and the modern poetic school" (Vuković, 1996, pp. 153–154).

⁴ See Pavček (1957, 1962, 1975).

The most significant changes in Serbian poetry for children are not linked to folklore heritage. The poetic discontinuity in relation to the singing of Jovan Jovanović Zmaj took place between the two world wars within the framework of the "literary left", making historical processes in it partially coincide with cultural-historical processes on the great cultural scene. A member of the Belgrade surrealism circle, Aleksandar Vučo, published, in the early 1930s, two poems for children: *Travels and Adventures of Kočo the Brave* (1930) and *The Adventures of the Five Little Rooster Company* (1933). *Travels and Adventures of Kočo the Brave* was inspired by adventure literature and film, while *The Adventures of the Five Little Rooster Company* are thematically related, even in a social function, with novels on children's companies of their time. The boys in Vučo's company are pronouncedly, socially exploited members of the working class bringing the poem close to social literature. Their courage, determination, fight for freedom (they save a girl imprisoned in a girls' institute) also build a particular social and ideological symbolism. On the other hand, Vučo's poems take children on a geographical and ideological world stage and rest on a language that is urban, expressive, that owes a lot to the contemporary media culture and is full of jargon. *The Adventures of the Five Little Rooster Company* have elements of hallucination, insomnia, occasionally actions close to surreal automated writing, of fantasy resembling Carroll's (Vuković, 1979, p. 80), parody, grotesque, nonsense ... Vučo's poem is unquestionably founded on the idea of synthesizing the social and aesthetic, that was on the literary left advocated by Miroslav Krleža and Marko Ristić. In writing about *The Adventures of the Five Little Rooster Company* Marko Ristić (1934) used, for the first time on the cultural scene of the former Yugoslavia, the attribute *modern* along children's poetry.

Vučo's influence is rather obvious in Serbian poetry for children in the first half of the 1950s. It is a genre, as many poets, following Vučo's model, sing longer songs (or, poems, it is difficult to define the boundary) that permeate the narrative and lyric. They most frequently use Vučo's "elastic octet" (an octet which, as needed can be doubled or halved), their view is directed towards the global stage, their poetry welcomes the surreal and grotesque, and the theme has elements of adventure. It is socially engaged, most frequently inspired by the fight against colonialism (Ljuštanović, 2009, pp. 140-153). Still, the poetic circle of the 1950s saw a weakening of explicit social and strengthening of the aesthetic function of poetry.

Aleksandar Vučo himself, wrote new versions of his own poem, but decided to present to the public the new version of the one poem which was not as directly socially engaged *The Travels and Adventures of Koča the Brave* under the title *Dream and Reality of Koča the Brave* (1957). The new version was concise, formally polished up, with more precisely developed relationship between the main plot and forms of its retardation, with a more selected adventure invoice, more humorous and semantically open, with mere hints of direct ideological engagement (e.g. Koča is saved by a ship with a flag of the socialist Yugoslavia). The move away from ideology is evident in the poetry of Vučo's most consistent follower – Arsen Diklić. His book *Čika s bradom*

i druge dunavske balade (Eng. *Man with the Beard and other Danube Ballads*) (1959) has four ballads of which three have a predominantly aesthetic function, while only one (*Boat*) is particularly ideologically engaged. For example, the cover ballad *Čika s bradom* (Eng. *Man with the Beard*) is a narrative about a dream where surreal impulses, “Carroll’s fantasy”, nonsense play, and events stem from the grotesque and funny unpredictability of dreams. The ballad *Raft* (later, often published under the title *Blue Whale*) developed a nonsense game at several levels. The summary itself, which sings about the confrontation between the blue whale and a drunken sailor, overlaps the adventure subtext and children’s affinity to anthropomorphize animals, and overall, is nonsense, as it is only a play of imagination, a humorous construct without much sense. Nonsense emerges at the micro level as well, for example, rhymes constitute the world of this ballad regardless of the meaningfulness of concepts that are brought into relation.

The poet whose poetry is colored by the poetic impulses of Vučo’s work is Dragan Lukić. He is only partially inspired by Vučo’s poems (e.g. the urban setting in them), but is more inspired by the song *Moj tata tramvaj vozi* (Eng. *My Father Drives a Tram*). In that song, Vučo takes the child into the streets of a city while he watches the father in the world of work and sympathizes with him. Lukić (1962) also takes the child into the big city streets and his child observes city life and his family with a child’s curiosity and excitement. In a childlike, animistic way, he brings to life the inanimate – automobiles, trolleybuses – creates a special child urban mythology from skyscrapers, balconies, lifts, but leaves out the direct social function of that urban experience which was present in Vučo’s song.

Still, the most far-reaching novelty in Serbian poetry for children during the 1950s was brought by Dušan Radović. His poems for children thematically gripe the world of people and anthropomorphized animals, however that is never a mimesis, but an expression of children’s wishes and fears, and perhaps most often, an attractive and apparently ephemeral construct evolved from child’s play and poetic game. For Radović, the poetic subject is the voice of an adult, who is presented as a partner in a children’s game; he jokes, creates riddles, surprises, as the poet himself says: “sweetly lies to children”. His poetic games, although deeply immersed in the naïve and sensitive world of childhood, are always markedly intellectual and often imply a particular intertextual and intermedia experience related to adventure novels and film, and to fairytales, tongue-twisters, counting rhymes, charms... Radović’s opus is not extensive. His first collection of poetry, the picture book *Dear Children* (1954), contains only 9 poems, but the poems are not only based on language games but are a part of the intermedia game within the picture book they were published in.

Conclusion

The mentioned poets and collections of poetry are only a few significant points in the complex literary-history and cultural process of aesthetizing of poetry for

children during the 1950s in the cultural area of former Yugoslavia. The process took place among different national cultures and different cultural centers in a variety of manners. For example, it would be interesting to trace its reactions in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Poets such as Branko Ćopić (1955) and Grigor Vitez (1957) who have a common partisan and socialist-realistic ideological foundation, while at the same time bringing innovation into play, humor, and nonsense into poetry were published in Sarajevo. The Sarajevo journal *Izraz* (Eng. *Expression*) published texts from the European cultural horizon, which bring a new concept of literature for children such as *To Write for Kids...* by Claude Aveline (1957). The literary scene is enriched by the work of the national critic and essayist Husein Tahmišić, who promotes the new, modern understanding of children's literature.

The emergence of modern poetry for children occurred in an evolutionary manner, through the change of the dominant, and in a variety of ways permeated the cultural area of former Yugoslavia not only during the 1950s but also in the 1960s and 1970s. The expansion was reflected in the suppression of the direct social function of poetry, juxtaposition of play and humor in poetry, the omission or mediation of the educational function through play and humor. All of that took place under the direct or indirect influence of European children's literature,⁵ and general cultural paradigms formed in western culture. In the events, one can recognize reactions to understanding the importance of play for human culture – human culture emerged from play and man is *homo ludens* (Huizinga, 1970). The construct of childhood in Yugoslavia, regardless of maintaining some ideological content, included the ideas of Jean Piaget (1968) on the importance of play for child development. Cumulatively looking, the narrative on childhood moved from the pedagogical towards a psychological and anthropological discourse.

The anthropological horizon, the preoccupation with universal humanistic and existential issues, was the main thematic and semantic foundation of "socialist aestheticism". Modern poetry for children fits into the framework in its particular way. In narrating the freedom of play, it certainly narrated a kind of universal human freedom. That freedom undoubtedly has its own cultural and human value and yielded significant aesthetic results. At the same time, the freedom meant liberation from recognizing and understanding the true status of child in a contemporary socialist society of former Yugoslavia and liberation from part of the cultural heritage, which was, for ideological reasons, tabooed. While modern poets had the liberty to break almost all language rules, play with semantics, syntax, morphology, at the same time the required reading in schools could not have mention of God. Fairy tales such as *Cinderella* (Brothers Grimm) or *The Happy Prince*, by Oscar Wilde, were censored. The creative freedom of modern poetry for children was, simultaneously authentic

⁵ There is marked influence of English children's literature. Works of Lewis Carroll (1952) and Alexander Alan Milne (1952) were translated as they brought a logic of dreams, play, humor, nonsense and partnership relationship between adults and children.

freedom and an ideological illusion, a broad area of creativity that had its visible and invisible boundaries. That identical cultural position applied to all literature that originated under the symbol of Yugoslav “socialist aestheticism”. On the great cultural scene, the “aestheticism” started to disintegrate during the 1960s. Particular works and authors started getting involved in a direct confrontation with the ideological authority. Poetry and literature for children in general will, under such circumstances, remain aside. The question why, is another literary history and cultural topic.

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Jovan Ljuštanović

Preschool Teacher Training College in Novi Sad,
Petra Drapšina 8, Novi Sad, Vojvodina, Serbia
joljilja@gmail.com

Jugoslavenski „socijalistički estetizam“ i nastanak moderne poezije za djecu

Sažetak

Rad se bavi ideološki uvjetovanim promjenama kulturne politike u socijalističkoj Jugoslaviji u prvom desetljeću poslije Drugoga svjetskog rata (1945. – 1955.) i njihovim utjecajima na dječju poeziju. Nagli zaokret od partijski kontroliranog socijalističkog realizma prema slobodi (također ideološki uspostavljenoj) znanstvenog i umjetničkog stvaralaštva rezultirao je umjetničko-ideološkim fenomenom koji pojedini povjesničari književnosti nazivaju socijalističkim estetizmom. Naš rad dokazuje da je izraz takvog estetizma u dječjoj književnosti moderna poezija za djecu. Ideje stvaralačke slobode i sveopćeg društvenog modernizma reflektirale su se i u prosvjetnoj politici i u društvenoj skrbi o djeci i mladima. Sve je to našlo svoj izraz u poeziji koja daje prednost igri, i to, prije svega, igri u jeziku, humoru i mašti nad izravnom pedagoškom funkcijom. Takva poezija ima svoje izvore i u narodnoj i u europskoj književnoj tradiciji, otvorena je za dječje želje i strahove, emancipacijska je, ali je istodobno i odijeljena od mnogih aspekata stvarnoga dječjeg života i položaja djeteta u društvu. Takva je poezija na različite načine nastajala unutar različitih nacionalnih kultura nekadašnje socijalističke Jugoslavije, istodobno ostvarujući slične i po mnogo čemu usporedive estetske i socijalne učinke.

Ključne riječi: dječja poezija; estetska funkcija; ideologija; igra; nonsens.